



**U.S. EMBASSY TBILISI
CONSULAR SECTION**

CONSULAR CORNER

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2012 New Year's Greeting from Ambassador John R. Bass

As we begin a new year, it is customary to look back over the previous twelve months. We see that the strong friendship between the peoples of the United States and Georgia is even deeper. But I'd like to go back further because we are on the eve of a very important anniversary that binds our two countries together.

Twenty years ago, on Christmas Day 1991, President George H. W. Bush spoke to the American people in a live broadcast from the White House. "Eastern Europe is free," he said. "The Soviet Union itself is no more. This is a victory for democracy and freedom." He then announced his decision to recognize Georgia's independence.

Georgians should feel justifiably proud of all they have accomplished in the last two decades. They have shrugged off the specter of communism and embraced democracy. Georgians have fought corruption and laid the foundations for a free and fair society. But the hard work is not finished yet, as any American can tell. We've been working on our democracy for 200 years to get it right. As Georgia strengthens its own democracy, we will do everything possible to support those efforts.

Since Georgia regained its independence, Americans have been at Georgia's side. Since 1991, the U.S. has provided over \$3 billion in foreign assistance, including \$1 billion since 2008. In just the last ten years, trade between the United States and Georgia has passed \$2.2 billion dollars.

During these last twenty years, our friendship has been strengthened by more than 45 bilateral treaties and other agreements. We have supported Georgia's achievement of independence in word and fact – by helping Georgia secure its borders, grow its economy and build the foundations of a modern democratic state.

Our close, enduring relationship thrives because of the shared values of our two peoples. More than 5,000 Georgians have traveled to the U.S. on exchange programs. This year alone, 460 Georgian students are studying at college campuses at universities across the United States -- an all-time high. More than 420 Peace Corps Volunteers have come to Georgia over the past ten years to live and work side-by-side with Georgians in towns and villages where few have ever met an American. These people to people contacts are at the very heart of our friendship.

Our friendship is not a one-way street. In recent years, we have seen Georgia give back to the rest of the world. We are proud and grateful for the heroic service of Georgian soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq. Together, Americans and Georgians are fighting and winning against tyranny and oppression. We are proud that Americans and Georgians are working together to make the world we live in a better place – one that reflects our shared commitment to freedom and democracy.

On March 24, 2012, we will celebrate the day our two countries formalized diplomatic relations. We're planning a lot of events next year to celebrate this historic anniversary and we invite you to join us. Georgia is an invaluable partner and a good friend to America.

To unsubscribe from the newsletter, please e-mail us at:
askconsultbilisi@state.gov

American Citizen Information Night 2011



The United States Embassy Consular Section, in cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM), organized the third annual American Citizens' Information Night at the U.S. Embassy on November 10, 2011.

Americans living in Georgia were given the opportunity to learn more about goods and services available to them from a variety of experts including American Chamber of Commerce members, the Georgian Government, and the U.S. Embassy. Thanks to Borjomi, Chateau Mukhrani, McDonald's, Natakhtari, Pepsi, and Texas Chicken the more than three hundred guests who braved the cold didn't go away hungry or thirsty!

We look forward to seeing you at our next American Citizens' Information Night in Fall 2012!



CHÂTEAU
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Georgia 2011 Crime and Safety Report



Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Crime overall in Tbilisi and other cities within Georgia has been on a steady decline for the past several years due to the establishment of a professional law enforcement presence and an overall increase in the standard of living. However, despite this progress, crimes against Americans and other westerners are still being reported.

Crime Threats

Crimes against Americans reported to the U.S. Embassy in 2011 included aggravated assault, sexual assault, rape, and theft.

There have also been reports of nuisance street children who are known to badger, hassle, and behave aggressively toward foreigners. It is best to ignore and avoid these children since engaging them can further fuel their aggressiveness.

There are periodic reports of violence and intimidation against foreigners in bars, nightclubs and similar venues. Locals routinely imbibe large amounts of alcohol in these venues and can be aggressive in their attempts to cajole foreigners to join in the heavy drinking. Refusing an offered drink from a Georgian may be considered an insult, so tact and graciousness are important in preventing conflict.

Road Safety

Driving in Georgia can be extremely hazardous. Local drivers pay little attention to speed limits and lane discipline, and regularly encroach into oncoming traffic. Despite a zero tolerance law in regards to drinking and driving, intoxicated drivers continue to be a problem, especially in the evenings and on holidays. It is strongly advised that drivers maintain an acute level of situational awareness and that seatbelts be worn by all occupants at all times.

Travel between cities after sundown is not recommended due to insufficient lighting and poor road conditions.

There is little access to emergency medical services outside of the capital. There is also a heightened vulnerability to crime during vehicle malfunctions or stops.

The Regional Security Office (RSO) of U.S. Embassy Tbilisi advises caution in the use of the Tbilisi underground Metro, marshrutka mini-buses, and any other form of public transportation. The majority of taxis in Georgia are private individuals who own a car and use it as an unofficial cab as a source of income. Since these taxis are not regulated, it is advised to use an official taxi cab company. Several established taxi cab companies exist in Tbilisi such as Red/Silver Taxi Cab Service and the Pelican (Blue) Taxi Service. The Red/Silver Cab Service can be reached at the number 2511 from landline or 032 511 from a cell phone. You can contact Pelican Taxi's dispatcher at 2939 939 from landline or 0322 939 939 from a cell phone. Both companies have English speaking dispatchers. (Note: Passengers should instruct taxi drivers to slow down if they do not feel comfortable with the operating speed).

Police Response

In general terms, Georgian police are attentive and responsive to requests and calls for assistance from foreigners, Americans in particular. However, much of their effectiveness is based on resources, or lack thereof. Police response in Tbilisi can range from several minutes to an hour in some cases. Police response outside of Tbilisi can be considerably longer in the more remote areas. Although there has been much progress in the Georgian government's efforts to reform the police organizations and fight internal corruption, serious concerns remain regarding the police's ability to deter criminal activity and conduct effective post-incident investigations.

How to handle incidents of police detention or harassment:

American citizens who have been detained or harassed by the police should contact the U.S. Embassy's American Citizen Services unit in the Consular Section at the following numbers:

Embassy Main Number: (995) (32) 227-70-00 {0830 to 1730 hours, Mon-Fri}

American Citizen Services: (995) (32) 227-77-24

Embassy Emergency Number: (995) (32) 227-71-33 {24/7}

The Consular Section has information available to assist victims of crime seeking assistance from local police, medical attention, finding a local attorney, contacting family or relatives in the United States, and contacting airlines regarding travel arrangements.

Also be aware that the local police emergency phone number is 122.

Georgia 2011 Crime and Safety Report*- continued -***Medical Emergencies**

The local phone number for medical emergencies is 113.

Contact information for local hospitals and clinics:

For medical emergencies, the Embassy health unit advises American citizens to consider MediClub (995) (32) 225-1991 or the emergency and general physicians at IMSS (995) (32) 2920-928 / 2921-670. It is highly recommended for both short term and long term travelers to purchase overseas medical insurance and medical evacuation insurance. Two overseas medical insurers used by Americans in the past are International SOS, www.internationalsos.com (1-215-942-8000), and MEDEX Assist, www.medexassist.com (1-800-732-5309).

Air ambulance services:

The above mentioned insurance providers offer 24/7 air ambulance service and emergency medical assistance if deemed required by local medical professionals.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

In light of the environment, all American citizens visiting Georgia are strongly advised to maintain keen security awareness and exercise basic security precautions. They should vary routes and times, especially when traveling between places of residence to work locations. They should maintain a low profile by not carrying large amounts of cash or displaying jewelry. Additionally, Americans should be aware of their surroundings, travel in pairs or groups, and stay on main streets where possible. It is also recommended that those traveling throughout the country do so only in the daylight hours, and that they provide travel itinerary and contact information to friends or colleagues. The driving culture is very dangerous and automobile travelers should wear seatbelts and drive defensively at all times.

The taxi cab industry is poorly regulated; foreigners are often charged rates higher than those of local residents. It is advised to negotiate a fare before utilizing a local taxi. It is further advised that visitors only utilize reputable and established taxi services that are run by companies and not private individuals.

Further Information

As a result of civil wars in the 1980s and early 1990s, two separatist regions in Georgia remain beyond the control of the government: the South Ossetia region, in north-central Georgia; and the Abkhazia region, in northwest Georgia. Tensions are high between the separatist regions and the central government, and fighting broke out in August 2008 between Georgian, Russian and South Ossetian de facto forces. The situation remains tense, with Russian troops and border guards stationed in both separatist regions. Due to the volatility of the political situation, reported high levels of crime, and inability of Embassy personnel to regularly travel to Abkhazia or South Ossetia, the U.S. Embassy advises American citizens not to travel to these separatist-controlled regions. The restricted access of U.S. officials to Abkhazia and South Ossetia significantly limits the ability of the U.S. Government to assist American citizens in these regions, even in emergencies. All travelers to these regions should register with the U.S. Embassy. The U.S. Embassy recommends that any travel to Abkhazia or South Ossetia be conducted in accordance with applicable Georgian laws and that Americans regularly monitor emergency messages on the Embassy website for the latest information on the security situation throughout Georgia.

Political demonstrations take place from time to time in Tbilisi, and frequently take place in front of the Parliament building on Rustaveli Avenue. While these demonstrations are generally peaceful, some confrontations have occurred, and we wish to remind all Americans that even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can escalate into violence.

Regardless of the region in Georgia one is planning to visit, American citizens are urged to review their personal security precautions, increase their levels of awareness, register with the consular section and, as appropriate, take increased security measures. American citizens in Georgia are also advised to be aware of their surroundings at all times and to avoid straying off main roads or traveling after dark.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State's **Bureau of Consular Affairs' website**, which contains current the **Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts** as well as the **Worldwide Caution**. The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State's extensive tips and advice on **traveling safely abroad**.

A well-informed traveler is a safer traveler!

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)



Stay Informed!

Sign up for **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program** (formerly known as “Travel Registration” or “Registration with Embassies”) to receive the latest travel updates and information! When you sign up, you will automatically receive the most current information from the U.S. Embassy Consular section in

Tbilisi. You only need to sign up once, and then you can add and delete trips from your account based on your current travel plans.

Stay Connected!

When an emergency happens, or if natural disaster, terrorism, or civil unrest strikes during your foreign travel, the nearest U.S. embassy can be your source of assistance and information. By informing us about your trip or residence abroad, you help the Consular section locate you when you might need us the most. Signing up is voluntary and costs nothing, but it should be a big part of your travel planning and security.

Your Privacy Is Paramount!

All the personal information you provide to us is protected under the Privacy Act of 1974. This law prohibits us from sharing the information with anyone *without your written authorization*. Certain exceptions exist, such as when we need to share information on a limited basis in order to protect your safety and welfare in extreme circumstances.

State Department Releases "Smart Traveler" App

The Department of State released its new *Smart Traveler* app (**available free from the Apple App Store**) for U.S. travelers going abroad. The app is compatible with iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad (requires iOS 4.0 or later).

Information for the app comes from content that is also posted to **<http://www.state.gov>** and **<http://travel.state.gov>**. Please visit those websites for even more information on international travel, foreign policy, and the work of the U.S. Department of State.

For information please see:

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/smart-traveler/id442693988?mt=8>



About The App

Smart Traveler, the official State Department app for U.S. travelers, invites you to see the world with easy access to frequently updated official country information, travel alerts, travel warnings, maps, U.S. embassy locations, and more.

With *Smart Traveler*, you can create personal itineraries, add notes, and organize your trips.

Smart Traveler also provides access to the State Department's **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)**. Free STEP enrollment enables the State Department to better assist you in emergencies such as natural disasters, unrest in foreign countries, or lost/stolen passports overseas. During your travels, **STEP** can help your family and friends reach you in an emergency.

Smart Traveler also provides quick access to the Department's Consular Affairs **Facebook** and **Twitter** pages.



Consular Flag
Click [here](#) to View the History

UPDATES... MESSAGES FOR U.S. CITIZENS

The U.S. Department of State is retiring the “warden message.” Previously, the warden message was used to disseminate information about routine topics as well as emergency information highlighting potential threats to U.S. citizens abroad. The U.S. Embassy Consular section in Tbilisi continues to enroll wardens as local contacts in times of crisis. However, we communicate directly with members of the local U.S. citizen community via email and short text messages.

The U.S. Department of State divides messages into three categories:

“[Message for U.S. Citizens](#)”, “[Security Message for U.S. Citizens](#)”, “[Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens](#)”

-- “Message for U.S. Citizens” will be the label for routine but important messages such as voting news, outreach information, or newsletters.

-- “Security Message for U.S. Citizens” will be the label for personal security threats of a general or systemic nature, such as crime trends, demonstrations, peaceful actions intended to disrupt normal activity.

-- “Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens” will be the label for breaking news messages containing advice for the resident community, such as those alerting U.S. citizens to demonstrations, a political crisis, a natural disaster, or a terrorist attack.

Messages are posted on our embassy website at <http://georgia.usembassy.gov/>. Notifications for the entire world are also available at the International Travel section of the <http://travel.state.gov> website.

Note!!!

New page for “[Demonstration Notices](#)” has been added to our website - - -

Demonstration Notices are a special class of message to U.S. citizens that are designed to alert American citizens to a probable demonstration over a fixed period of time at a particular location. This information is conveyed so that you can take appropriate action to provide for your own safety and security.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Sender’s ID for Short Text Messages from the U.S. Embassy Consular section previously titled as “Warden MSG” will now be displayed as “**Embassy MSG**”.

If you have enrolled in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#), but have not provided a cell phone number and now wish to begin receiving text messages from the U.S. Embassy Consular section in Tbilisi, please email us at askconsultbilisi@state.gov



[HTTP://WWW.TRAVEL.STATE.GOV](http://www.travel.state.gov)

Tips for Traveling Abroad

*The Bureau of Consular Affairs in the U.S. Department of State
has no higher responsibility than safeguarding our country's citizens.*

For detailed information about steps you can take to ensure a safe trip, see [How to Have a Safe Trip](#). Meanwhile, here are some quick tips to make your travel easier and safer:

Travelers should familiarize themselves with their destinations, both to get the most enjoyment out of the visit and to avoid known dangers and inconveniences.

Insurance

Obtaining medical treatment and hospital care abroad can be expensive, and medical evacuation to the U.S. can cost more than \$100,000. U.S. medical insurance is generally not accepted outside the United States, and Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid do not provide coverage for hospital or any medical expenses outside the United States. Check with your health insurance provider to see if and in which circumstances and countries you will be covered overseas. Your health insurance provider may also require you to provide notification of your travel before you depart the United States and for any treatment before it's provided. If your insurance policy does not cover you abroad, it is a good idea to consider purchasing a short-term policy that does. There are health insurance policies specifically designed to cover travel. Many companies offer short-term health and emergency assistance policies to cover health care expenses incurred overseas, including emergency services such as medical evacuations.

Financial Information

Understand the financial system and ascertain currency exchange rates at your travel destination. Inform your bank or credit card company of your travel plans so that their security measures do not freeze your account.

Bringing Medications or Filling Prescriptions Abroad

A traveler going abroad with a preexisting medical problem should carry a letter from the attending physician, describing the medical condition and any prescription medications, including the generic names of prescribed drugs. Any medications being carried overseas should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled.

Information on filling a prescription abroad and other health issues may be found at:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1215.html.

For more information that can help you plan a wonderful (and trouble-free) trip, visit:

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#safe_trip

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING FILING IMMIGRANT VISA PETITIONS FOR ALIEN RELATIVES



Effective August 15, 2011, petitioners residing overseas will no longer be able to routinely file Forms I-130, Petitions for Alien Relative, with U.S. Embassies and Consulates except in locations where U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (**USCIS**) has a public counter presence within the Embassy or Consulate. Petitioners residing overseas in countries where USCIS does not have a public counter presence will be required to file their Forms I-130 by mail with the USCIS Chicago lockbox. U.S. Embassies and Consulates that do not have a USCIS presence will only be able to accept and process Forms I-130 in exceptional circumstances. Forms I-130 that were properly filed at an Embassy or Consulate overseas where USCIS does not have a presence before August 15, 2011, will not be affected by this change.

If the petitioner resides in Georgia, where USCIS does not have a public counter presence, the Form I-130 must be filed with the USCIS Chicago Lockbox at one of the addresses below, unless the petitioner requests and is granted an exception based on one of the criteria described below:

USCIS Chicago Lockbox addresses for regular mail deliveries: USCIS P.O. Box 804625 Chicago, IL 60680-4107

USCIS Chicago Lockbox address for express mail and courier deliveries: USCIS Attn: I-130 131 South Dearborn-3rd Floor Chicago, IL 60603-5517

For additional information about how to file a Form I-130 with the USCIS Chicago lockbox, please see the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov or contact USCIS by phone at 1- 800-375-5283.

Exceptional Filing at U.S. Embassies or Consulates without a USCIS Field Office:

Beginning August 15, 2011, petitioners, who do not reside in a country with a USCIS field office, but who believe that their situation merits an exception, may request an exception to allow the Consular Section at the Embassy or Consulate to accept the filing. Each request for an exception will be evaluated individually.

A petitioner seeking to file a Form I-130 at the U.S. Embassy Consular section in Tbilisi should contact the Consular Section to request consideration of the request for exception and explain the circumstances in detail. The Consular Section will then relay the request for an exception to the USCIS field office at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, which has jurisdiction over the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi. The determination of whether the case presents exceptional circumstances that warrant an exception to the general filing process will be made by USCIS. USCIS published guidance on the circumstances that may qualify as exceptional on their [website](http://www.uscis.gov).

QUESTIONS???

Please contact the U.S. Embassy Consular Section **Immigrant Visa Unit** at:

tbilisiimmigrant@state.gov

The U.S. Electronic Passport

What is an Electronic Passport?

An Electronic Passport is the same as a traditional passport with the addition of a small **integrated circuit** (or “chip”) embedded in the back cover. The chip stores:

The same data visually displayed on the data page of the passport;

A biometric identifier in the form of a digital image of the passport photograph, which will facilitate the use of face recognition technology at ports-of-entry;

The unique chip identification number; and

A digital signature to protect the stored data from alteration.

What are the special features of an Electronic Passport?

The special features of an Electronic Passport are:

Securely stored biographical information and digital image that are identical to the information that is visually displayed in the passport;

Contactless chip technology that allows the information stored in an Electronic Passport to be read by special chip readers at a close distance; and

Digital signature technology that is used to verify the authenticity of the data stored on the chip. This technology is commonly used in credit cards and other secure documents using integrated circuits or chips.

How does an Electronic Passport facilitate travel?

The Electronic Passport facilitates travel by allowing:

Automated identity verification;

Faster immigration inspections; and

Greater border protection and security.

The Electronic Passport is designed to function for the passport's full validity period under normal use.

What happens if an Electronic Passport is lost or stolen?

Any passport that is lost or stolen should be reported immediately. U.S. passports reported lost or stolen are invalidated and can no longer be used for travel. Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy Consular section or Consulate General to report and replace a lost or stolen U.S. passport.

What is the Electronic Passport logo and what does it mean?

The Electronic Passport logo is the international symbol for an electronic passport. It signifies that the passport contains an integrated circuit or chip on which data about the passport and passport bearer is stored. The logo will be displayed at border inspection lanes at all airports and transit ports equipped with special data readers for Electronic Passports.

Can a previously issued passport still be used for travel as long as it is still valid?

Yes. Previously issued passports that are still valid can be used for travel.

Can the information on the chip be altered and how is the information protected from being accessed by an unauthorized reader?

The new passports use Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) technology that prevents the information stored on the chip from being altered. The e-passport and the use of the PKI digital signature stands to benefit the legitimate traveler. It provides a more sophisticated means to confirm that the traveler is the rightful holder of the passport and that the passport is authentic, thus deterring would-be passport/identity thieves. Use of the PKI to validate and authenticate the data in the chip supports passport inspection and would strengthen border control systems.

What will happen if my Electronic Passport fails at a port-of-entry?

The chip in the passport is just one of the many security features of the new passport. If the chip fails, the passport remains a valid travel document until its expiration date. You will continue to be processed by the port-of-entry officer as if you had a passport without a chip.

Note: Passport processing time at the U.S. Embassy Consular section in Tbilisi: from 5 to 7 business days
View the instructions for passport application at: <http://georgia.usembassy.gov/citizenship-passport-services.html>

PASSPORT BOOK & PASSPORT CARD



U.S. PASSPORT BOOK

Valid for international travel by air, sea or land.

Validity:

- 10 years for adults
- 5 years for minors under age 16

Size:

5" x 3 ½" (when closed)

Cost:

For First Time Applicant/Lost or Stolen Passport Replacement:

- \$135 for adults

For Renewal:

- \$110 for adults

- \$105 for minors under age 16

U.S. PASSPORT CARD

Valid when entering the United States from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda at land border crossings or sea ports-of-entry. Not valid for international travel by air.

Validity:

- 10 years for adults
- 5 years for minors under age 16

Size:

Wallet size

Cost:

For Previous Passport Holders:

- \$30 for adults

- \$40 for minors under age 16

- \$15 for minors under age 16 (In connection with a book application)

To contact the
Consular section during
business hours call
(995 32) 227-77-24

Email:
AskConsulTbilisi@state.gov

For after-hours
emergencies
(995 32) 227-71-33

Reminder: Appointments Mandatory for Routine ACS Services

All of our American citizen services are available by appointment only.

Visitors may receive multiple services during the same visit — please make a separate appointment for each service (e.g., to apply for passports and obtain a notary service, make two appointments).

Arrive few minutes before your appointment to allow time to go through security.

ACS appointments must be made using our website:

<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html>

In case you need an emergency appointment please contact us via phone or email and we will try to accommodate your request at the earliest convenience.

The following services do not need an appointment and may stop by the Consular **any business day** from 2pm to 4 pm:

- ☐ Report an emergency or urgent matter (e.g., death, hospitalization, or arrest of a U.S. citizen)
- ☐ Report a lost or stolen passport
- ☐ Pick up passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- ☐ Pick up Social Security or tax refund checks



Leaving Georgia?

If you are departing Georgia and have been enrolled in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (**STEP**), please do not forget to end your enrollment when you leave.

You can end your enrollment by visiting the <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/> if you previously enrolled through this site.

If you previously submitted a paper registration form at the U.S. Embassy Consular section in Tbilisi, you may unregister yourself by sending an email request to close your enrollment with the Embassy to: askconsultbilisi@state.gov



2012 ELECTION CYCLE BEGINS NOW

**Be an active voter!
Start thinking about your
participation in the U.S.
2012 elections today!**

New absentee voting laws are in effect for the 2012 elections. You will no longer automatically receive ballots based on a previous absentee ballot request. All U.S. citizens outside the United States who want to vote by absentee ballot in the 2012 primary and general elections must complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) every year if they wish to vote from abroad. States are now required to send out ballots 45 days before an election. No matter what state you vote in, you can now ask your local election officials to provide your blank ballots to you electronically (by email, internet download, or fax, depending on your state). You can now also confirm your registration and ballot delivery on-line. Be sure to include your email address on the form to take advantage of the electronic ballot delivery option. This is the fastest and most reliable way to receive your ballot on time, and we strongly recommend every overseas voter take advantage of it. Learn more at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website www.FVAP.gov.

You can obtain a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) at [FVAP's website](http://www.FVAP.gov). The FPCA is accepted by all local election officials in all U.S. states and territories. It allows you to register to vote and request absentee ballots for all elections for federal offices (presidential and state primaries, run-off, special, and the November general elections) during the course of the year. An online wizard will help you complete the form. Depending on your state's voting requirements, you then either send in the FPCA electronically or mail it to your local election officials. To mail it, print out the completed FPCA and the (U.S.) postage-paid envelope containing the address of your local election officials. If you bring in your forms or ballots to us we will mail them back home for you without you having to pay for international mail. If it's easier for you to use Georgia's postal system, be sure to affix sufficient postage and allow sufficient time for international mail delivery.

U.S. citizens may drop off voting forms and ballots at the Embassy's Consular Section any working day from Monday thru Thursday, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. If not using a pre-paid envelope, please make sure that your letters and packages have proper U.S. postage.

Be an Educated Voter. Check out the FVAP links page for helpful resources that will aid your research of candidates and issues. Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues are widely available and easy to obtain via numerous websites such as [Project Smart Voter](http://ProjectSmartVoter.org). For information about election dates and deadlines, subscribe to FVAP's Voting Alerts (vote@fvap.gov). FVAP also shares Voting Alerts via [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/fvap) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/fvap).

If you have any questions about registering to vote overseas, please contact Voting Assistance Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi at: askconsultbilisi@state.gov



**Be an Absentee Voter,
Not an Absentee Citizen
[VOTE](#) !**

REGISTER AND REQUEST YOUR BALLOT FOR UPCOMING PRIMARIES

Voters from these States should visit the FVAP.gov web portal to register and request their absentee ballot for the March, April, and May 2012 Presidential Preference Primary (P) and State Primary (S) elections listed below:

April Primaries: (60-Day Notice)

If you have not received your requested State ballot, submit the back-up Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot at FVAP.gov (see FWAB information below).

- District of Columbia (P,S): April 3
- Maryland (P,S): April 3
- Texas (P,S): April 3 (This is a change, the election was originally scheduled March 6)
- Wisconsin (P): April 3
- Alabama (Primary Runoff): April 24
- Connecticut (P): April 24
- Delaware (P): April 24
- New York (P): April 24
- Pennsylvania (P,S): April 24
- Rhode Island (P): April 24

May Primaries: (90-Day Notice)

- Indiana (P,S): May 8
- North Carolina (P,S): May 8
- West Virginia (P,S): May 8
- Idaho (P,S): May 15
- Nebraska (P,S): May 15
- Oregon (P,S): May 15
- Arkansas (P,S): May 22
- Kentucky (P,S): May 22
- Texas (Primary Runoff): May 22

[View the Primary Election Calendar](#) at FVAP.gov for more information.



FAQ: How long can I stay in Georgia without a visa?

U.S. citizens staying in Georgia for 360 days or less do not need a visa to enter Georgia. For more information please click [here](#).

In case your stay in Georgia is more than 360 days, without leaving the country, U.S. citizens should obtain residence permits at the Civil Registry Agency in Georgia. For instructions please click [here](#).

CATCH ALL THE LATEST

Visit the U.S. Embassy Tbilisi [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages for all the latest news of the U.S. mission in Georgia.

View the updated [Country Specific Information](#) on Georgia on the State Department website:
<http://travel.state.gov>

Dip Note <http://blogs.state.gov>

DipNote is the official blog of the U.S. Department of State—a place to share stories, discuss experiences, and inspire new ideas on the important foreign policy issues of the day.

About the State Department Blog

The mission of the U.S. Department of State is to create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community.

Through its websites and other online resources, the Department offers broad public access to a wide range of information. [Blogs.state.gov](http://blogs.state.gov) offers the public an alternative source to mainstream media for U.S. foreign policy information. This blog offers the opportunity for participants to discuss important foreign policy issues with senior Department officials.



www.americancorners.ge

AMERICAN CORNERS IN GEORGIA

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WE WELCOME YOUR IDEAS...

The American Citizen Services Unit is constantly thinking of new ways to improve our service and efficiency.

If you have an idea or a suggestion about how we can make your visit easier, or about items or subjects you'd like to see covered in this newsletter, please let us know by email:

askconsultbilisi@state.gov

The ACS Unit is unable to answer questions concerning U.S. visas. Any question concerning non-immigrant or immigrant U.S. visa should be directed to the Visa Unit.

For non-immigrant visa related issues e-mail: tbilisivisa@state.gov

For immigrant visa related issues email: tbilisiimmigrant@state.gov



Important Security Announcement

When visiting the Embassy, please remember not to bring mobile phones or any electronic devices (such as Blackberries, iPods, or PDAs), food/drinks, medicine or cosmetic products, as they are not allowed within the Embassy. We also strongly advise that you do not bring large bags, such as backpacks, suitcases or packages to the interview as there are no storage facilities on Embassy grounds.

Patrol Police

Tel: +995 32 122

Emergency

Tel: +995 32 113

Fire Station

Tel: +995 32 111

Information Centre

Tel: 118 09

Airport Hotline

Tel: +995 32 2310421; +995 32 2310341

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

Tel: +995 32 2945000

USEFUL

CONTACT

INFO

LIST OF DOCTORS

LIST OF ATTORNEYS

CIVIL REGISTRY AGENCY

Issues residency permits, Georgian passports, civil documents, Apostilles on Georgian documents.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

Information on Tourism activities, entertainment, cultural events.

E-map of Georgia



Hours of Operation & Contact Information

American citizen services are available by appointment only. To make an appointment for citizen services please visit

<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html>

Address: # 11 George Balanchine str.
0131 Tbilisi

Telephone: (995 32) 227-77-24

After hours emergency number:
(995 32) 227-71-33

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR U.S. CITIZENS !!!

In case of a crisis and/or natural disaster American citizens in Georgia may tune in to the following FM radio stations for updated U.S. Embassy emergency messages and information for U.S. citizens:

Radio Syndicate — 104.3 FM (Tbilisi and Gori)

Radio GIPA — 94.3 FM (Tbilisi)

Radio Atinati — 105.9 FM (Zugdidi)

Radio Hereti - 102.8 FM (Lagodekhi and Kakheti)

Radio Dzveli Kalaki — 107.9 FM (Kutaisi)

Radio Harmonia — 100.5 FM (Poti)

2012 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

April 9	Mon	Georgian	Memorial Day
April 13	Fri	Georgian	Good Friday
April 16	Mon	Georgian	Easter Monday
May 9	Wed	Georgian	Victory Day
May 28	Mon	US	Memorial Day
July 4	Wed	US	Independence Day
August 28	Tue	Georgian	Assumption
September 3	Mon	US	Labor Day
October 8	Mon	US	Columbus Day
November 12	Mon	US	Veteran's Day
November 22	Thu	US	Thanksgiving Day
November 23	Wed	Georgian	St. George's Day
December 25	Tue	US	Christmas Day